The Brethren Evangelist

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The Council At Jerusalem.

The council held at Jerusalem in the days of the Apostles was a gathering of much importance, and in the record as found in the 15th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, there is wisdom and knowlege that can be utilized in this late day.

This chapter is the foundation upon which many sects base their authority for holding councils and making decisions. It is taken as a precedence by religious autocrats, and every shade of ecclesiastical bodies, who engage in the creation of mandatory rules, for the government of churches. The interpretations of the right exercised by the apostles make them mean almost any thing in the department of church goverment and religious legislation. This question is suggested by the record: What use can be made of the information transmitted to us in the history as given in the Acts?

An inquiry after the prerogatives of the apostles and elders in that council is in place, and in what capacity did they act? It is well night a self-evident truth, prominent in reading the scriptures, that Christ has transmitted no legislative authority to any part of the church or an person in the flesh. The sole legislative prerogative is invested in the Lord Jesus. He purchased the human family, and in becoming his possession, he along possessed the authority to promulgate laws for their religious and spiritual government. This then precludes to man the right or authority to legislate for the spiritual government of other men.

The acts of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem in the council under consideration were plainly judicial. Judicial power has been delegated to faithful men, in some degree, as the council of Jerusalem evinces. The apostles and elders were not called upon to make a new law, or promulgate a new edict to be obeyed, but there was a difference between the teaching of Barnabas and Paul on one side, and the certain men who came down from Judea on the other. The men from Judea held that Paul and Barnabas were not orthodox. They as they were pledged, did not preach all the truth, and to this extent their ministry fell short in providing the requisite and necessary instruction for the kingdom of heaven. Paul and Barnabas contended that they preached all that was necessary. Here was a difference, and they went to the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem for a decision. It was plainly a judicial question, and the brethren at Jerusalem were called upon to act in such authority. They had no right to make new laws and add them to the law given them by the new Law Giver, Christ. They, therefore only judged that it was not necessary for the Gentile converts to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses.

The judicial prerogative has not been taken from the church. The church, its elders and members are still to judge between man and man, or between its members when differences arise between them. In 1 Cor 6, that church is rebuked for going to law before the world, and Paul asks the question whether there is not one among them competent to decide between brother and brother, in as much as the saints are to judge the world in the last day.

The Lord has made the rules and law that are to govern the church, and man is entrusted with judicial authority, and no more, and all who use the council of Jerusalem for authority to make laws and rules to govern the consciences of men, are basing their authority on a thing that does not exist, as no legislative act was there executed. The Apostles and elders only judged between brethren.

When is the Spiritual Birth.

The views maintained by some Bible students certainly makes the Spiritual Birth premature. All concede that there is meaning in the language of Christ to Nicodemus, except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God. This was a puzzle to Nicodemus, and even is to many in this late day, who have the spiritual birth here, and men who are supposed to be born of the spirit, full of malice, envy, hatred, ill-will, contention, jealousy, deceit, slander and unrighteousness; bodies defiled by baneful practices and hearts floundering in covetousness. Those are pretty-looking spiritual beings indeed.

Christ says the wind bloweth where it listeth and the sound is head, but no one knoweth from whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the spirit. How many who profess Christ do this here? Christ did it after his resurrection, and we challenge the whole earth to furnish positive evidence of another instauce.

Men are supposed to be born of the spirit, who, instead of going where they will, are laid upon beds of affliction, are in trouble, in sorrow, endure pain, anguish, persecutions, and torments. Ah indeed such spiritual birth is the most insignificant birth of all.

What is it to be born? An intelligent conception of the subject necessitates a sensible understanding of what birth is. There is no mystery, or nothing profound about being born. It is simply entering into a new existence. Bursting forth into a new life or into a new being. The natural birth is a good illustration, and the entering into this existence or commencing this earthly life. This is all there is in birth. and no man can make anything more of it.

The Spiritual birth then means born of the Spirit. The Spirit is the Mother. When it brings forth a man he may then be said to be born of the Spirit, and of course he will have a body like his mother,—a spiritual. body, and no man is born of the Spirit, until he does have a spiritual body, then he can go wheresoever he wills—listeth.

Well says one, does not John say, 'Who soever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.' Yes, he so says. But *born of God is not of the Spirit. No man can be born of God.* This is self-evident. God is the masculine, and the masculine never brings forth.

This will be called a flat contradiction of God's word, but the statements have been made to arouse the reader to a little investigation. An apology for the translator is in order here. Just insert the word *'begotten'* insead of *'born.'* in 1 John v, 1, and you will have it right. There is only a shade of difference between the two words, yet to make God the Mother of the redeemed is not right, nor scriptural, and leads men into stupendous and ridiculous error.

The Birth of the spirit means etrance into the spiritual realm and the everlasting joys of the endless life.

We are begotten or chosen of God when led from darkness or the way of sin unto life or the way of righteousness, and when the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, Mother Spirit will bring it forth in immortality. St. John xii, 24; 1 Cor. xv, 36, 37, 38, 53, 54.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

There was a great increase in the work done in Japan by missionaries last year. It is marvelous how rapidly Japan is being converted from heathenism.

Theodore Cuyler says 'Conversion is a change of residence for the soul.' Really, it seems more like a change of purposes of the soul.

Germans, Englishmen and Americans were lately engaged in a struggle over the island of Samoa in the Pacific Ocean. Recently a hurricane blew all the war vessels anchored there almost to pieces. It seemed that Providence took a hand in the trouble, and it went a great way in pacifying the disturbances.

Prophetic expositors figure the end of this age to April 1901. This date is just twelve years hence. If the Millennium commences then, many who are now living will see the day, if no unusual pestilence, war and famine come upon the earth.

There are signs of coming political storms in Europe. France seems to be very near another revolution.

'Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life,' applies to the Old Bible. When Christ spoke in that manner, the Gospels were not written.

Single immersion with the use of the formula and backward action came into use in 1522 A. D. So it is not yet four hundred years old. Why will men contend for a baptism that is so new and which evidence shows was instituted by men. In religion. men would do well to use the good judgment of getting what is best, as they do in business. But men too frequently hold the cause of religion of the least importance. Sprinkling, pouring and single immersion, which history plainly shows were not original manners of baptism are accepted and believed to be all right.

Christ will come as a thief in the night. That is, he will come and many will not know it. The thief is seldom discovered until his work is done and he is again gone. Only those who are watching will discover the theft, so only those who are watching will discover Christ. They will see the signs but will not believe them.

MANY QUESTIONS. Here is a letter with many questions to answer:

BRO. EDITOR:—I would like to ask you a question through the EVANGELIST. Why is it that members cannot afford to take the church paper when one member will spend from 25 to 60 cents for cigars almost every week, besides buying candies for their children. The publisher needs the price of the paper.

But is this all? No: Think of the poor pastor and his candyless children. My child likes candy, but the members think it wrong for a preacher's child to have a stick of candy. But the same brother will puff a cigar all day long, and when the minister asks him to take the paper he is hard up and the poor preacher's heart is made to bleed by his sarcasm. Besides the preacher is often asked why you do not look as well as that M. E. minister, why don't you? And at the same time if I was to ask that same brother for $3 to get me a pair of shoes he would insult me. Now, Bro. Editor, is a preacher a human? Does not a preacher like to have a cent to get a postal card once in a while? Should not the preacher have sixty cents to get his wife a calico dress to go out on the street with. or must he and his family live on chaff and beg for that, and his wife not allowed to be seen with a dress that costs more than 6 cts a yard? Bro. Editor, I would like to have you answer the above questions for the sake of a poor, humble preacher and his congregation of wealthy members.

A PREACHER.

We would answer by saying, preach hell fire to sinners in the church and out, and if they will not heed the gospel, then shake the dust off of your feet as a testimony against them at the day of judgment.

We direct the attention of all who are interested in the Immortality question to send for the tract advertised on the last page this week. After reading it, the Christian will understand why he should be righteous.

Some time ago a copper syndicate was formed in Paris for the purpose of controlling the price of copper in the whole earth. The undertaking was too colossal and recently collapsed. Why will men disposed to undertake great things not undertake a great church or missionary enterprise.

A brother in renewing his subscription, says the paper should be stopped if it is not renewed before the subscription expires. I have no fault to find with the paper; the trouble is the money part. We depend upon the subscriptions we receive to publish a paper. We do more work for little pay than any other party in the Brotherhood, but many think they are under no obligation of any kind, we suppose, neither to the paper that on which so much depends, to the church nor to God. Some are poor, indeed, but before you decide to withdraw the pittance that is asked for the paper, from the Lord's work, just ask yourself the question, what obligations is God under to save you. How much sacrifice have you made? We neither wear fine clothes, chew tobacco, eat candy, drink strong drink, smoke, nor attend theatres. Our life and our money are all going into the Lord's work. Brother subscriber, do not forget that the EVANGELIST is the Church Paper, recognized to be so in two conventions of the Brethren Church, and to it you owe at least the annual subscription.

The lay member who does nothing toward making it possible to go and teach all nations is equally guilty with the preacher. They are the ones who can send men, and the Apostle Paul asks how men will go unless they are sent. We emphasize this duty of lay members, because we do not want to be an unfaithful messenger to the brethren. It is a part of your duty, brethren, to save a part of your income for that purpose.

The name of John Bright is one of the grandest that appears upon the list of great men of England. He was true to every principle of right and his honor unsullied even to the hour of his death a few days ago.

The ancient Greeks were a people who had many gods, a god for each division of science, literature and art. The Christians have one God who is the originator of all virtue and goodness. This God has proven himself worthy by the great acts he has performed by his prophets and representatives.

The Christian Herald says:

'A strange story of a famous vagrant is told in connection with the discovery of a dead body found on March 24th, in a cave near Sing Sing, N. Y. Two persons who visited the cave on that day were horrified to find there a corpse, which they immediately recognized as that of a tramp who has been a familiar figure for nearly forty years in New York and Connecticut, and who was known as *the Old Leather Man.* Since the year 1850 he has been met on the country roads of the two States, walking regularly over routes that he appeared to have laid out and followed punctually. He was clad, summer and winter, in a queer suit of leather, made of old boot-tops, which he had sewn together with strings. How he lived was a mystery. Occasionally, but very seldom, he would do a day's work, taking pay in food or tobacco. Sometimes a compassionate person would give him food, but he did not beg. He had found a chain of caves on his routes, where he would sleep at night, or if he had no cave in the locality where he might be, he would creep into a barn and sleep there. About ten years ago a Frenchman came and searched for him, saying that the old tramp belonged to a wealthy family in Lyons, France, who wanted to provide for him. He found the vagrant, but could not induce him to return. It is now stated that in his youth he fell in love with a girl who worked in a leather factory in Lyons, but was prevented marrying her. She disappeared mysteriously, and he, thinking that she had been murdered in a plan to thwart the marriage, resolved to make the rest of his life a penance. Whether or not this is the true version, it may be presumed that the man was partially insane, as, if he had possessed the use of his reason, he must have seen that his life was of inconsequent foolishness, unavailing as an atonement for his own sins or those of others. There are many people, however, who are perfectly sane, yet persist in equally futile efforts to atone for their sins, and remain strangers to their Heavenly Father's house, when they might be forgiven and received if they would accept the atonement God has provided. (Heb. 10: 8-10).'

Letter from A. H. Cassel.

March 22.—When Hochman preached for the Pietists, he did not lay much stress on water baptism, and indeed not very much on any outward ordinances.

He believed in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, like the Quakers, or like most of the Mystics, and religious enthusiasts, at that time did, and cared but little about the ordinances. But after Mack and others became enlightened, he became convinced, but was several times imprisoned, so that he could not preach much anymore.

A. H. CASSEL.

N. B. Cassel says his eyes are still so weak that he is not allowed to write much.

Alexander Mack was the first preacher of the Tunker Brethren church in Germany, founded in 1708.

The first company of about twenty families came over in 1719. The second company of about thirty families in 1729.

Mack preached before he became a preacher of the Brethren church.

OBED SNOWBERGER.

THE TREASURY for Pastor and People closes its sixth year with the April number. This magazine has not only fulfilled the promises made in its prospectus, but has far exceeded them. It has neven failed to give its readers in each number rich, fresh, varied and highly instructive articles, admirably adapted to the many side necessities of preachers and Christian workers. The Index of the sixth volume which is published in this number shows how full of good things this treasury is. One feature is noteworthy: it never fails to furnish timely services for all seasons and commemorative occasions. This number has a portrait of Prof. A. M. Growden, a sermon by him, a view of his church and a sketch of his life. Dr. Burrell's sermon on The Unjust Steward is well adapted to the times and Dr. John Hall's Talk to business Men on Neglecting the Great Salvation, is an earnest, powerful appeal. A beautiful sermon for Easter, and one on Centennial Patriotism are highly suitable for the present April commemorations. The Cross and the Throne and Precious Faith furnish subjects for leading thoughts of sermons. Ministers—Young and Old, is a theme treated by Dr. Cuyler in his own common-sense, convincing way. Woman's Work for Women is discussed by Dr. Draper. How Shall we Attract the Masses to the Church, by Dr. C. C. McCabe. The Sabbath School Lessons by Dr. Moment and Commemoration. The Teaching Press, The Church's Greatest Hinderance and Limbering a Creed by the Editor are each and all excellent, with many other articles. Yearly, $2.50. Clergymen, $2.00. Single copies, 25 cents.